

THE liberal

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

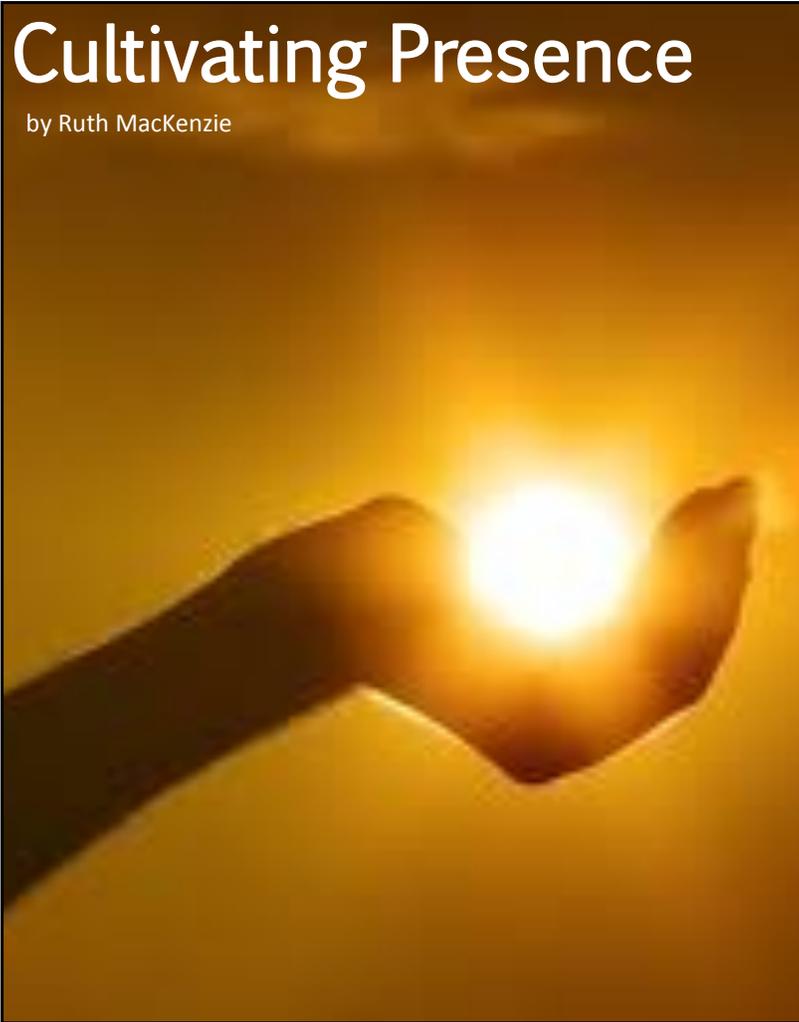
In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow.

Issue 4, Number 1

September 2012

Cultivating Presence

by Ruth MacKenzie



When we cultivate a plot of earth, we are making it ready to produce something nourishing to the stomach, or to the eye. We awaken the soil's potential by scratching around with a rake or a hoe. We feed the soil by reimagining and reworking what was once considered waste, but is now fertilizer. We tend to the earth, and plant life emerges from the deep, dark mystery, and creates sustenance for our bodies and our souls.

So when we say, we are *cultivating* presence, we are talking about awakening, feeding, reimagining, and tending to presence. Presence is another way of saying radically connected. Presence happens when our mind and body are in the same place at the same time. Presence is being fully awake and engaged in a situation, fully present to another person, wide open to the spirit. It means reimagining and reworking the wounds of this life, until they become blessings. It is cultivating a way of being in the world that nourishes us, and others.

(continued on page 2)

We Welcome Rev. Jen Crow

Rev. Jen Crow gave her first sermon, *In Cupped Hands*, as our new Minister of Program Life on August 12. Passionate about creating a community where everyone can grow and no one needs to walk alone, Jen brings a focus on love and transformation to her ministry. She trusts the wisdom of the gathered community, values the empowerment of others, and leans in to the movement of the spirit - on her best days.

(continued on page 2)



Take this chance

by Scott Marshall

The great questions by which any church must be judged are:

- *What have its ideas and its people done for the community?*
- *What kind of men and women has it produced?*
- *And what has been the character of their deeds?*

Reverend Marion Shutter, 1909
First Universalist Church 50th anniversary address

I would like to take this chance.

In order that First Universalist may live into these questions, our current strategic plan calls us to “be an effective, loving force for faith in action work.” In this spirit, a steering committee people and three Umbrella Leadership Teams (Environment, Housing & Homelessness, and Immigration) have been meeting regularly since January to create pathways for First Universalist to be an effective, loving force through our Faith in Action commitments.

We are addressing issues of each Umbrella from both social service and social change perspectives. At the core of this work is our effort to create a strong and intentional connection between our work and our UU principles. This fall each Umbrella team will debut an event or program. Please watch firstuniv.org, First U eNews, and listen to future messages from the pulpit for specifics, and of course – join us!

I would like to give you this chance.

In late September the steering committee and the Umbrella Leadership Teams will retreat to a cabin for an evening and full day of planning, reflecting, and doing. We are hopeful that the retreat will nurture our spirits, build our community, and solidify our understanding of the work ahead.

If this sounds interesting to you you’d like to know more about the steering committee or one of the Umbrella Leadership Teams, please email Deb Rodgers, our Director of Faith in Action at debra@firstuniv.org.

I would like to take this chance.

I would like to give you this chance.

We do one thing or another; we stay the same, or we change.

Congratulations, if you have changed.

From Mary Oliver's
To Begin With, The Sweet Grass

Celebrating Generosity

In July, First Universalist donated 132 pounds of food to Joyce Food Shelf.

Thanks to Paul Kloth of the Building and Grounds (BAG) team for his leadership in identifying capital improvements needed for our building. Stop by and see the new sidewalk and bike racks.

Each Sunday, 70% of our morning's offering goes to organizations in the wider community. On May 20 & 27, our congregants gave \$4800 to Minnesotans United for All Families to help their fight against the Marriage Amendment.

On June 24, First Universalist collected \$675 in offering for the GLBT Host Home Program of Avenues for Homeless Youth.

(continued from page 1) **Cultivating Presence**

Theologian Marjorie Hewwitt Suchocki talks about spirituality as “a yearning to overcome the smallness of being, to develop a wideness of personality that lives and acts toward a greater good than one’s own.” This month we explore the spiritual practice of radical connection between body and mind, external and internal, subject and object, private and institutional, public and personal. We will endeavor to widen our personality, as individuals and a church, so we might answer our calling to create a greater good, and grow the beloved community by cultivating presence.

(continued from page 1) **Welcome Jen Crow**

The founder of the Wellspring Program for Unitarian Universalist Spiritual Deepening which is now used in over 20 Unitarian Universalist congregations around the country, Jen draws on our own UU prophets for strength and inspiration, as well as her own daily spiritual practice of prayer and meditation.

A Joy to be Together

What a joy it is to be together. The drift of summer days with their lengthy light-filled afternoons and evenings have made space for travels of the body and spirit, for rest and renewal, for a return home greeted by the abundance of seeds and fruits now in bud.

July brought the gifts of our ever-talented Director of Worship Arts, Ruth MacKenzie to our pulpit and our lives as our Summer Minister. August 1st brought the return of Justin Schroeder, our Senior Minister, to church after a time of study and vacation, and August 1st brought the beginning of a new ministry with Rev. Jen Crow as our Minister of Program Life.

What a joy it is to be together as a new ministry team - what a joy it is to be together as a congregation living and serving in the Universalist spirit of love and hope as we give, receive, and grow.

As this season unfolds, we are delighted to begin our working relationship together - and to discover all of the ways that we will change one another for the better. We are engaging in spiritual practices together, visioning, laughing, and sharing stories about who we are and what we care about. As we deepen our relationships with each other, our shared ministry deepens as well. We are busy at work, too, digging into our Strategic Plan (<http://firstuniv.org/strategicplan>) as we explore concrete ways to make it come alive this year and take deep root in the life of the church.

Together, we are thrilled and honored to work with such an outstanding, professional, dedicated staff. We genuinely care for one another, celebrate each other's gifts, challenge each other, and serve this wonderful faith community with love and gratitude. We are glad to be here. We are glad to be here with you. We are glad to be here with you, together.



Rev. Justin Schroeder and Rev. Jen Crow

The New Choir Loft

BIG thanks to Dan Bishop and the choir loft crew who volunteered time (over 500 hours!) to design and build the new loft for our growing choir (70 members strong). Architect: Weld Ransom; Builders: Chuck Coskran, David Juncker, Bill McTeer, Tom Saterstrom, Stan Satinger, Dennis Sherwood, Ted Thompson, and Sal Valdovinos; Helpers: Choir members and friends.

A special thanks to Dan Bishop for coordinating this effort and for generously donating the materials needed.



Connect on a welcome team



We are committed to being a welcoming community! As part of our commitment, we are forming Welcome Teams of 12-16 people each for the 2012-2013 church year. Each team serves one service each month to greet visitors and members, serve coffee, answer questions about the church and Unitarian Universalism, and help visiting families participate in Religious Educa-

tion. You need not have signed the membership book to participate on a Welcome Team. Welcome Teams are a great way to meet others at First U and find new friends while helping our church provide a warm welcome to all who seek us. If you are interested in serving on a Welcome Team once a month before and after one service, contact sandy@firstuniv.org, or x125, or sign up at The Hub.

“Our team calls ourselves the Great Greeters, and as team leader, I think we really are great! I especially love gathering before the service with my team. We check in one-by-one around the circle, sharing and listening to significant things that have happened since we met a month prior. A new person joining creates energy and curiosity. And, when we greet at the doors, chat with visitors, and serve coffee, we demonstrate the love and hope of our faith by inviting others in.” – Ann Kay

“Whether or not you are new to our church, being a member of a welcome team is one of the most satisfying experiences you can get. In my all of my years at church, being in the welcome team was where I felt I had the most positive impact.

One of my favorite rewards was inviting my team to my home for a potluck... my team was a party waiting for a place to happen.” – Kimon Swarts

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FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow.

Ministers

Senior Minister	Rev. Justin Schroeder
Program Life	Rev. Jen Crow
Intern	Laura Smidzik
Emeriti	Rev. John Cummins Rev. Kate Tucker

Worship Arts

Director	Ruth MacKenzie
Music Director	John Jensen
Choral Director	Randal Buikema

Finance and Administration

Director	Susan Claeys
Assistant Finance Administrator	Brad Schmidt
Office Manager	Trish Greene
Facility Manager	Tracy Van Epps
Senior Cleaning Custodian	Tim Ewing
Evening Custodian	Albert Reed
Sound System Operator	David Kellermann

Faith in Action

Director	Debra Rodgers
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Membership and Adult Ministries

Director	Heidi Mastrud
Membership Support	Sandy DiNanni
Communications Coordinator	Craig Lindahl-Urben

Children, Youth and Families

Director	Lauren Wyeth
Youth and Young Adult Ministries Coordinator	Katie Heaton
Program Assistant/Childcare Provider	Lily Franz
2 & 3 Year Old Teacher	Emily Christie
Children's Music Coordinator	Mary Bohman

If you want a print version of the *Liberal*, contact sandy@firstuniv.org, 612-825-1701 x125, or pick up a print copy at The Hub. The online color version at firstuniv.org/newsletter has live links. Our office hours are Mon-Thurs 8:30am-8pm; Fri 8:30am-4pm; Sat we are closed; Sun 9:00am-1pm. 3400 Dupont Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55408
Phone: 612-825-1701 Fax: 612-825-8879
www.firstuniv.org

Small Groups Big Connections

"The idea to join a Small Group came to me as I sat in the pews and listened to Justin rave about how wonderful an experience being in a Small Group could be. Sometimes things come into your life for a reason. I entered in to my group of parents with young children with great trepidation. Honestly, I needed a couple of hours apart from my young son, and just some time to be with adults. What I didn't expect was to find that my Small Group time allowed me to enter in to a space of reflection and support. I came to the group expecting light discussion about our kids and out lives. In actuality, it was people letting their guard down, engaging in meaningful, mind blowing, raw discussions about life. It was amazing what people shared. I was apprehensive at first, feeling out of place, like people wouldn't be interested in what I had to say, like we had nothing in common. But, what I experienced was that by letting my guard down, that there was connectedness between us. Being in this Small Group was really empowering during a time in my life with some real struggles. It made this large church community feel more intimate. I don't feel as lost in the masses, even though we're newer members. If you're on the fence about joining a Small Group, I say "go for it." Don't hesitate."



Groups start soon

Starting this fall groups of 8-10 people will meet every other week to explore sermons, spirituality, and UU theology through telling about our own life experiences. This is a deeply satisfying way to expand your connections to other church members, and to your own religious impulse. Choose a group that meets September – December, or September – May. You'll be invited to sign up for a group that works for your schedule: weekday, weekend, day or night. Childcare will be available for evening and weekend groups at no cost (with advance notice).

Small Groups are different from other groups. They are a place to engage in the spiritual practice of deep listening, get to know a small number of people you might not normally meet, reflect on how your life experience informs your faith (and vice versa), and act together to serve the larger community. It is not a forum for debate or therapy.

Next Step: Sign up in one of three ways;

1. Visit The Hub in the Social Hall on September 16 or 23.
2. Contact heidi@firstuniv.org, or in the office x124.
3. Sign up at firstuniv.org/smallgroups on or after September 16.

"When Stan and I landed in Minneapolis from our longtime home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, we knew that we would need to find a way to get to know people. We had belonged to a Unitarian-Universalist congregation in Pittsburgh and had made great friends there. After visiting First Universalist on several occasions, we decided to find a way to meet people and develop relationships in our new church home.

Enter a Sunday service announcement about Small Groups. Stan and I discussed it that very morning and signed up immediately. We decided to be part of a couples' group that met during the day. It was a great find!!! Our leaders, Pat and Larry Gottschalk, were adept at encouraging dialogue. The people who participated were friendly and inclusive and more than willing to share stories about their lives and how the Sunday services impacted them. It was so enlightening to hear their words and to not only get to know them better, but to also learn some of the history of our new home state. The best part came when we attended the Valentine's Day Party and had the hands of our small group waving us to a place at their table. That was the greatest!!

We have continued to be involved in each others' lives during the best of times and the most challenging. Thanks to the Small Group experience, we are active participants rather than onlookers." - Jerry Sattinger

Art in Worship

The presence of Art

by Ruth MacKenzie

Every artist understands a point in the creative process when time falls away, and we are absolutely present to the spirit of art making. Singers describe it as the song singing them. Writers talk about a character writing her own storyline.

Jazz musicians talk about riding a riff. Any way you look at it, art in all its forms cultivates presence. This year presents many opportunities to cultivate radical connectivity through the arts.



Give words to worship

Do you love worship? Do you have a flair for writing stories or prose? Are you comfortable speaking in front of a group? Please consider applying to be a Worship Associate this year.

The Worship Associates are a group of 8 to 10 people who will be meaningfully involved in the planning, creation and presentation of each Sunday's service during the church year. Each member will share the chancel with the presiding minister once every two months, and will be responsible for various pieces of the worship service such as: writing and presenting Words of Welcome, writing and presenting the Call to Worship, finding poems or readings for monthly themes, presenting one or more of the readings for the week, writing and presenting words for the Offertory. Worship Associates will participate in this 8 month pilot program January – August 2013. Preparation for Worship Associates will entail two half day retreats. The first retreat is scheduled for Oct 7, 2012.

To Apply— choose a piece of writing that is meaningful to you, a poem, a novel, or a story. Write a half page piece explaining why this work touches your spirit.

We will be choosing applicants representative of the multi-generational, multi-cultural congregation we are becoming. The application process can all be done online. Visit: <http://firstuniv.org/worshipassociate>, **deadline for applications is Sept. 15**. If you are unable to go online, please drop off your materials at the church office, attention: Ruth MacKenzie, ruth@firstuniv.org. 612-825-1701 x 127.

Universal Jazz Band

The Universal Jazz Band rehearses Monday nights at 7:30pm starting August 27. In addition to swing arrangements, we will take on "fusion" and contemporary jazz pieces by Pat Metheny and others. Rehearsals will be fun, challenging and provocative. Come the new year, we unveil these pieces for winter and spring services on Sunday morning. All jazz instrumentalists are welcome to join in this musical feast, and chew on some great new repertoire.

Jazz Band needs a bassist and a guitarist. Rehearsals begin August 27. Please contact John Jensen: pianojj@earthlink.net.

Folk Band

Ruth MacKenzie and John Jensen will team up to lead Folk Band starting in January. We'd love to hear your ideas about new repertoire and reinvigorating the folk program. Rehearsals begin in January but brainstorming begins this fall. Join John and Ruth for a folk round table on Monday, September 24th at 5:00pm. All folkies are welcome!

Our December Choral Work—*Awaken*



This December, First Universalist explores the call to “Awaken,” inspired by Bach’s Cantata #140 *Wachet auf*.

The First Universalist Choir will present *Wachet auf*, during worship on December 23. This call to “Awaken,” composed in 1731, will be woven into the service as the culmination of our four-week sermon series. Although J.S. Bach lived for 65 years and composed around 1200 works, *Wachet auf* has emerged as one of his most famous and well loved compositions. Accompanied by strings, oboes, English horn, French horn and continuo, the presentation of *Wachet auf* will cultivate introspection and joy as you prepare for the holidays.

This is a big work and our preparations begin now. The Choir is looking for extra singers from the congregation and larger community to participate in this exciting event. Rehearsals will be from 8:00-9:00 on Wednesday evenings beginning in October.

All Singers Welcome

Singers who would like to join the choir on a regular basis are always welcome. Rehearsals are from 7:00-9:00 on Wednesday evenings. Prior experience and the ability to read music are helpful, but not required.

For more information, contact randy@firstuniv.org or visit the website at firstuniv.org/music/choir.

All Instrumentalists

There are so many ways to plug in and play out at First Universalist Church. Along with opportunities in Jazz Band and Folk Band, we are assembling a list of brass, woodwind and string players to accompany hymns, and provide solo and ensemble work to accompany the choir. Please contact John Jensen, pianojj@earthlink.net, or Randy Buikema, randy@firstuniv.org, to express your interest.



Don't miss September 23 when First Universalist Choir is joined by Nirmala Rajasekar, world renowned Carnatic veena virtuoso and vocalist of South India. The choir will perform *Spiritus Sanctus* written by Ruth MacKenzie featuring the mystic poetry of Hildegarde von Bingen. In addition, Nirmala will offer solo works inspired by the 8th Century South Indian mystic, Andal.

Faith in Action

We built

For the entire week of August 13-17 and as part of our ongoing partnership with Habitat for Humanity, congregants of First Universalist worked on building a Habitat for Humanity home in North Minneapolis. On the 16th, staff from the church joined the effort.

"Thanks to 1st U, we are back on schedule, ready for shingles, mechanicals, water and electrical," said Habitat Site Supervisor McKensie "You people come to work!"



At the beginning of the week, the house looked like this.

We marched

On Sunday, Aug. 26, many First Universalist congregants traveled from our Sunday service to Sabathani Community Center where they rallied to march in opposition to the Voter ID Amendment. The march travelled from Sabathani down 38th and Nicollet to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

And we will vote

We are going to vote. I'm confident in that. The issues before us are too important to us to not vote. They speak to our heart. They speak to our dream of a more equitable world. They give us an opportunity to live out our values.

Our congregation voted on a resolution opposing the constitutional amendment around voter rights. A recent survey shows that people who "harbor negative sentiments towards African Americans" are also more likely to support voter ID laws. Shockingly, this racial resentment crosses party lines. Another report illustrates that race affects a person's ability to acquire a voter ID. One reason for this is that the offices that issue valid voter IDs are not easily accessible by people of color.

We are going to vote. We are going to vote to help break down the barriers that exist between white communities and communities of color. This election gives us a true opportunity to live out our values.



And this is the way it looked at the end of the week.



Our intrepid crew on site, planning their work.



Statewide worship service

Worship with us at First Universalist and celebrate our justice seeking faith on Sept. 30. Get inspired for the work of the final 36 days prior to the vote! Sunday, September 30, 6:00-7:30pm at First Universalist.

We will welcome a multi-congregation choir, rockin' music, and inspiring speakers, including Revs. Schroeder and Crow.

Children are welcome at the service and childcare for infants through school-aged children is available. Please let us know your childcare needs by Sept.23. Email or call Lily with names and ages—612-825-1701x107 or lily@firstuniv.org.

10th Anniversary and working for Marriage Equality

All are invited to come celebrate the 10th anniversary of Suzann Willhite and Kristin Siegesmund and do some FUNdraising to defeat the Marriage Prohibition Amendment.

Saturday, 7pm September 22nd at First Universalist Church. Listen to the Universal Jazz band, recognize our 10 years of commitment and have some fun before the November vote.



Voting Amendment Forum

Join us for a 90-minute educational forum and Q&A with First Universalist member and Minnesota Secretary of State, Mark Ritchie. He will discuss the proposed constitutional amendment related to elections and voting. It will be followed by a 30-minute MUUSJA action planning event. A light lunch will be served starting at 1:15. Sunday, Oct. 14, 1:30-3:30pm, First Universalist Church, Chalice Room.

Marriage Amendment Forum

Assumptions on the Marriage Amendment: A Reasoning Forum — Thursday, September 20, 2012, 7-9pm

If you find it difficult to understand why someone thinks or feels differently from you on this issue, this event will give you greater insight and understanding. Focusing on the assumptions that underlie our beliefs and actions, this panel of speakers will explore why and how various people have arrived at their positions. This is NOT a debate, but rather a respectful dialogue where we will attempt to listen, understand, and gain perspective. We'll delve into the different assumptions that underlie the political stances for or against the Marriage Prohibition Amendment.

Moderated by Dr. Frank Burton, panelists will include Rev. Oliver White of Grace Community United Church of Christ, Prof. John Gustav-Wrathall, Adjunct Professor of United Theological Seminary, August Berkshire, President of Minnesota Atheists and others. Join us, and invite your neighbors & colleagues, for this unique dialogue on the Marriage Prohibition Amendment.

Children, Youth and Families

Nurturing Children's Spirits

by Denise Konen

When my children were small I didn't know what to say to them about my spiritual beliefs because I was afraid of religion, didn't know what I believed anymore, and didn't know what they could handle.

I was raised Catholic and their father was Jewish and since we both didn't want to pass on anything negative we took a superficial and hands off attitude toward our family's spiritual growth. It is something I regret. When my second husband and I adopted my niece at age ten we knew we needed a village to help us. I am grateful that we found First Universalist because I had a chance for a do-over. Her needs were so great I was forced to face my fears and expand my belief system in order to help her . . . And by doing so I benefited as much (or maybe more) than she did!

Registration and parent orientation

All children, from nursery through senior high, should be registered for 2012-2013 RE, but it's not too late. Registration forms are available online at <http://firstuniv.org/CYF/REregistration>.

New and returning families of preschool through 6th grade children are invited to a twenty minute orientation and overview of the coming year on Sept. 16 and 23 after both services, in the Cummins Room at 10:45am and 12:30pm. Please join us!

Parents of 6th-8th grade students will receive notification of parent orientations by email.

Parents of senior high students are encouraged to contact Katie Heaton, katie@firstuniv.org, with any questions.

I taught Religious Education, helped launch the Family Chalice Initiative with Dr. William Doherty and even participated in taking youth on a trip to Boston for a spiritual pilgrimage. Most importantly, I dug deep to uncover what I really believed so that I could articulate it to her and my husband, listen to their ideas, and we could grow in our faith together. Out of those experiences grew a passion to share what I learned with other parents. I will be offering a four week class this fall from the Nurturing Children's Spirits curriculum I developed and facilitated several times as a Licensed Parent Educator for First Universalist Church and the UU Church of Minnetonka.

You are invited to this four week series, for parents of children from birth through ten years old, to develop ways to articulate and share your spiritual beliefs with your child at their level of understanding, while being receptive to their big questions and ideas. Class and childcare are provided free of charge through the generous pledges of First U members and friends.

Wednesdays, Sept. 26, Oct. 10 & 24, Nov. 14 6:30-8:00pm in Room 200 First Universalist Church. Contact Lily at Lily@firstuniv.org and request childcare. FFI: Contact Denise Konen, denise@netgains.net or 952-922-9257.

Changes to our Youth program

Our senior high program is experiencing a renewal of enthusiasm and interest following the high of Youth Sunday last spring. This year, to provide space and time for deep sharing and relationship, we're implementing some changes that will help us open our doors wider to meet the needs of our diverse First Universalist population. Our Youth & Young Adult Ministries Coordinator, Katie Heaton, will be co-leading an innovative new curriculum for 9th and 10th graders at both services. Youth in either grade are eligible to enroll in our Coming of Age (COA) program, a guided journey and celebration of the passage into spiritual adulthood.

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Welcome Back to RE Classes

Our new year of Religious Education (RE) classes kicks off Sept 16 9:30 & 11:15. Your volunteer RE teachers are an enthusiastic and dedicated group who look forward to welcoming old and new friends back into the classroom.

At every age, our children are offered age-appropriate curricula to help them find their way into a community that supports their spiritual development. Our lessons emphasize that we are all on a journey, and that the journey is best experienced in the company of others so that we might help one another along the way. We say that ours is “the church of open minds, loving hearts and helping hands.”

Toddlers and preschoolers (ages 2-5 years) learn that church is a fun place full of friends of all ages. They become familiar with our space and the rhythm of our Sunday mornings together, sharing stories, play, arts and crafts, circle time and snack.

Our kindergarteners and 1st graders learn about the Rainbow Path, which introduces the principles of Unitarian Universalism as a guide to making choices, caring for others, creating a fair and peaceful world, and being true to oneself. Each of the colors of the rainbow is linked with a UU principle in simple, memorable language. Stories, games and crafts bring the principles to life.

New this year, our 2nd through 5th graders begin their morning in Children’s Chapel, a sacred space filled with music, story and simple ritual, much of which will be led by the children themselves. The brief service gives kids a way to connect with UU worship elements (like lighting the chalice) and cherished hymns, so they develop a sense of being grounded and held in the loving arms of our liberal faith tradition.

Following Children’s Chapel, the 2nd-5th grade children will move to their RE classes, which offer a variety of activities to inspire spiritual exploration, growth and connections with others. Lessons for this age group are drawn from the *Tapestry of Faith* curricula, which the Unitarian Universalist Association developed for UU congregations. Tapestry of Faith sessions are active, fun, deep, and engaging for a diverse group of children with various needs and interests.

Our 6th graders are in a liminal time of life and an important stage of spiritual development. Not really children but not yet teens, they demand RE classes that are relevant, down to earth and a bit irreverent. We deliver, with a creative curriculum entitled *A Questing Year*. Kids are encouraged to be creative, speak their minds, and practice building a safe, fun and welcoming environment for all.

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New this year

Chalice Lighters

3rd through 6th grade children are invited to attend a special workshop, where they will learn about the history, meaning and tradition of lighting a chalice as we gather for worship. Those who complete the workshop will be invested as Chalice Lighters, and may sign up to assist in worship during Children's Chapels and in the Sanctuary.

RE Youth Assistants

Young leaders in grades 7-12 are invited to apply for an RE Youth Assistant position. Youth Assistants will receive special training and be eligible to sign up for paid positions including: providing RE staff support on Sunday mornings; providing childcare during church events; and acting as counselors for Chalice Camp next summer.

For more information on either opportunity, please contact Lauren at lauren@firstuniv.org or x111.

(continued from page 10) **Youth Program**

We've reconfigured COA to run outside of regular RE hours from January through May. Meanwhile, our 11th and 12th graders will continue to meet at 11:15 only. This year they, and their, adult advisors will be co-leading their own small group experience on alternate RE Sundays. Their other classes will focus on "Movers and Shakers: UUs Past and Present," in anticipation of their heritage trip to Boston in June 2013. For more detailed information, contact Katie at katie@firstuniv.org.



Get Involved

Opportunities for Spiritual Practice

Chi-Gung

All are welcome to join Chi-Gung at First Universalist. Chi-Gung is a centuries-old form of meditative exercise that centers the mind, increases self-awareness, builds internal energy, and develops a healthy, flexible body physically and spiritually. Chi-gung practice can diminish physical pain, stress, depression and isolation, relieve the effects of stress and support resistance to illness. You may stand or sit as needed, so the class is suitable for people with physical limitations or illness. Instructor Pat Gottschalk is a member of First U, and has an 18-year practice as a certified Shiatsu practitioner. Participants are encouraged to make a \$35 donation to First Universalist. All are welcome to attend, no matter your economic circumstances. **Fridays**, 10-11:30 a.m., 9 sessions Sept 21—Nov 16, Cummins Room. Contact: patgottschalk@yahoo.com, 612-861-4087.

The Buddhist Meditation & Study Group

Meets Tuesdays, 7-8:45pm, North Arches, from Oct. 2- Nov. 27. Contact: Susan Hagler, 612-825-7780, Susanhagler13@gmail.com.

Tai Chi Beginning at First Universalist

Join member Michael Dotson and guest teachers from the Chinatown Tai Chi Center to learn the basics of this Chinese martial art that is practiced for health and self-defense. Open to people of all ages and abilities who hope to explore this spiritual practice. No fee. Thursdays, September 27-December 6, 6:30-7:45 p.m. Sign up by contacting Sandy@firstuniv.org, 612-825-1701 x125 or visit the Hub. For more information, contact: Michael Dotson at 612-419-4260 or mdotson904@att.net.

Mostly Silence Meditation Group

The Mostly Silence Meditation Group will meet the first Thursdays of the months Sept 6 – Dec 6; 5:00 – 6:15 PM. Newcomers and drop-ins are welcome, even if you've never meditated before. Those who have experienced the group have appreciated meditating with other people in a group, and having it on one's calendar provides a specific opportunity to actually do it.

The group starts with a reading and check-in in the Chancel Room (left door behind the Sanctuary), then moves to a walking meditation in the Sanctuary, followed by a sitting meditation in the Meditation Room. We then return to the Chancel Room for reflection and closing words. Any questions, contact Michael Dotson at 612/ 419-4260 or mdotson904@att.net.

Labyrinth Open Walk

Wednesday, September 5, anytime 6:30-8pm. Join us on our monthly open walk on the labyrinth, a spiritual tool carved into our Social Hall. Travel the journey with an open mind, an open heart, and see what happens. Last walk begins at 7:45 p.m. Contact: Ann Hobbs, g.annhobbs@gmail.com.

Women's Ritual Circle

Under Northern Skies Women's Ritual Circle is a circle of self-identified women committed to spiritual growth, healing, and honoring the Earth in the experience of ritual, mystery and magic. Through shared responsibility we seek to embrace change, risk-taking, and continual learning. We gather at the new and full moon each month and draw from the astrological aspects of each moon to create ritual. New members are welcome to gather with us on Saturday, September 15 (New Moon in Virgo); Saturday, September 29 (Full Moon in Aries); Monday, October 15 (New Moon in Libra); and/or Monday, October 29 (Full Moon in Taurus). There will be a commitment ritual on Tuesday, November 13 (New Moon in Scorpio), after which the circle will be closed again to new members for a year. We gather at First Universalist Church at 7:15 pm with ritual from 7:30-8:30. Contact Beth by email at belovedporcupine@gmail.com with questions or for further information.

Our Labyrinth in Depth

Wednesday, Sept. 19, 7-9pm Rev. Barbara Kellett will be your guide for the evening.

Whether a newcomer or a long time member, are you curious about the grand labyrinth etched in the Social Hall floor? Learn some history and how labyrinths are used as a form of meditation or spiritual practice all around the globe. Learn pointers to walk a labyrinth and guidelines to teach others. In this easy and informative two hours, share your experiences and receive an 11x11 inch labyrinth pattern to duplicate, and an eight page document of possibilities and techniques. *RSVP to Ann Hobbs, g.annhobbs@gmail.com or 763-546-3337.*

Stay Connected

Heart to Heart

A Couples' Enrichment Weekend

Heart to Heart is a program sponsored by Unity Church-Unitarian. Led by three experienced couples, it is designed to enrich communication and intimacy in your relationship. This year's 18th annual fall retreat will be held **November 2-4, 2012**. All committed couples are welcome — same-sex and opposite-sex, married and unmarried. Space is limited, so please register early. For more information, visit the Heart to Heart website at <http://heart.mn.cx> or call 651-227-0486.

Association of Universalist Women

Join us for our kick-off dinner on Friday, September 28, 5:30-8pm in the Social Hall for dinner, camaraderie and fun!

More than 200 women last year deepened connections and community through AUW, the Association of Universalist Women at First Universalist, and, over its 107-year history, thousands more.

Whether you are new to First Universalist or just to AUW, all women are welcome to the Kick-off. You'll see old friends and make some new ones, learn of the many events and programs AUW organizes and supports -- and enjoy a nice dinner, too. Get the scoop on monthly Friday "Get Connected" gatherings, the annual fall and spring retreats, social justice work and more. Bring a friend! You do not need to be a member of First Universalist to participate in AUW programs. More info about AUW at 1uauw.org.

This event is free. RSVP to auw.firstuniv@gmail.com or sign up at the Hub. As always, childcare will be provided on request. Contact Lily Franz one week in advance at Lily@firstuniv.org, 612-825-1701 x107. If you'd like to help with this event, you are most appreciated! Please contact Evelyn Browne at ewbrowne57@gmail.com.

Friday Get Connected

Sept 7th, Fri, 7-9pm, AUW Friday Get Connected, in the Library. Come relax and meet women at AUW's series of casual gatherings on the first Friday of each month. Friday Get Connected kicks off with "Rhythms of the Night Sky" led by Judith Grittner. She'll use her fabric art to discuss where and when to look for zodiac and other constellations, visible planets and the phases of the moon. All women are welcome! No RSVP necessary. For free childcare, reserve one week in advance; contact Lily@firstuniv.org, 612-825-1701 x107.

Circle Suppers

Looking for a way to get better acquainted with people within the congregation and enjoy great food and conversation? You're invited to join Circle Suppers! Circle Suppers meet the first Saturday of every month from November through March. To sign up or for more information contact Marybeth Hoelzer 612-284-1221 or mhoelzer@mac.com by October 15.

Men's Support Group

Each man is capable of significant personal and spiritual growth. Each is whole. Each has his own timing. Each has his own answers. In the Men's Support Group we deal with the joys and sorrows of everyday life. We share with each other our lives as we experience them. We learn to better understand and cope with life's issues. We build on our strengths, get in touch with our power, explore alternatives and increase confidence.

Our expectations are regular, long term attendance, confidentiality, attentive listening and respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

We meet at the church every other Tuesday from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. We are seeking men of all ages to join our group and we are still open for September and October. For more information and to arrange to attend, phone Tom Greenspon: 952-929-1499.

(continued from page 11) **Welcome Back**

7th graders are ready to explore our own and other spiritual traditions through activities and field trips in Neighboring Faiths. 8th graders receive spiritually-grounded, comprehensive sexuality education in Our Whole Lives. And our senior high youth have great changes in store; take a look at Katie Heaton's synopsis and make sure your young person doesn't miss it!

Get Involved and Stay Connected

Considering Membership at First Universalist?

Choosing membership at First Universalist is a public declaration and a spiritual commitment to support this congregation and allow the community to support you. Membership is available to all, ages 14 and up, who are aligned with the mission, vision, and values of this church. Although most programs at the church are accessible to non-members, becoming a member allows you to participate in the governance of the congregation and gain access to our strong network of congregational care.

Details: firstuniv.org/membership

How Can I Learn More?

First Step is a brief overview of what our community has to offer. This session is especially for visitors and newcomers. The next sessions will be **September 2 and 16** following each service. No sign up is necessary. Childcare is available in Room 100.

Pathways to Membership

This class is for those new to Unitarian Universalism and/or First Universalist Church, and is a requirement for those who wish to become members. Next class: **Saturday, October 6**, 9:00am-1:00pm. Register by emailing Sandy@firstuniv.org. Free childcare available on request one week prior.



Open Minds

For almost 200 years archaeologists have been digging in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan, producing amazing discoveries and an immense amount of scholarly literature on the subject of the Bible. Here at the joint meeting of Secular Bible Study and First Universalist's Open Minds, this information will be synthesized in a vivid, easy-to-follow presentation by biblical scholar Nate Ramsayer. Visiting from Boston, MA where he studied archaeology at Harvard University and Boston University, Nate will be returning from a summer of excavating at the Philistine site of Tell es-Safi (biblical Gath, from where the giant Goliath is said to have come) in the Shephelah region in southern Israel.

Join us as Nate leads SBS and First Universalist members through an introduction of the excavation process, how artifacts and sites are dated, the differences between good and poor archaeological methods, and how understanding material culture informs our modern perspective of biblical events. So grab your fedora and whip, and come learn about fascinating discoveries from the land of the Bible!

Join us on Tuesday, September 18, 7-8:30pm in the Cummins Room.

Volunteers needed

First Universalist Fundraising Team

Are you creative? Do you like to have fun and work with a team? Do you have great ideas about how First Universalist can make money and deepen relationships at the same time? Join the new First Universalist Fundraising Team!

This team will look for creative opportunities to increase fundraising income for the church and build community at the same time. All levels of experience welcome. Open to newcomers and long-term members.

For more information, or to express interest in joining the team, contact Heidi Mastrud, Director of Membership & Adult Ministries, heidi@firstuniv.org, 612-825-1701 x124.

Church library committee

Love books? Our church library committee is seeking volunteers. Join our monthly meeting Tues. Sept. 18, in the library to see what we do and see if we are a fit for your volunteer efforts.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



Gathered Here

Explore, with other Unitarian Universalists in the Twin Cities area, what gives life and strength to our Unitarian Universalist faith. Attend this session to discover our common aspirations as UUs and consider how we might build our strengths for the future. Gathered Here is a joint initiative of the Unitarian Universalist Board of Trustees and the UUA administration. This activity involves one-on-one and group discussions about important topics that identify what makes Unitarian Universalism come alive for us. We will identify common themes that the UUA Board and Administration will use to shape the direction of the Association. We also expect to discover ideas and initiatives that we might want to develop across congregations in the Twin Cities area. Help unleash the power of our faith! No need to RSVP, but if you are bringing a large group, please let us know so that we will have enough food.

**Sept. 20 Cummins Room, 6:30-9:00 pm
6:30pm Light Supper, 7:00-9:00pm Program**

FFI: contact Laura Park, local Gathered Here coordinator and facilitator, 651-271-7666, laura@laurapark.name, or Chris Bremer, 612-226-9476 or bremner101@yahoo.com. If you can't attend the First Universalist session, consider attending a similar one at First Unitarian Society, 900 Mount Curve Ave. (Sept. 19, 6:30 supper, 7:00-9:00 program).

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.

What falls away is always. And is near.

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

I learn by going where I have to go.

Theodore Roethke

Beginnings

Joyce and Carl Berdie celebrate the May 25 wedding of their daughter Zoe to Joshua Joiner.

Elizabeth Dunbar and **Albert Rovira** celebrate the birth of **Jordi Dunbar Rovira** on May 17.

We celebrate with our 2011-2012 intern minister **Ralph Krog** who graduated from Starr King School for the Ministry, and with **Mary Bohman** and **Erin Margit Dajka**, who graduated from United Theological Seminary.

Journeys

Frederic MacDonald-Dennis, who had surgery on July 2.

Steven Lazarski, who was recently diagnosed with Stage IV pancreatic cancer. He and his family (Kim, Zeek, and Meadow) ask for our prayers.

Laura Smidzik, our ministerial intern, whose son, Corbin, had back surgery July 16.

New member **Sharon Broscha**, who donated her kidney to her mother, **Paula Broscha** on August 14.

Ron and Carol Flint Kaliebe, as Ron recovers from his second major cancer surgery this year.

We rejoice with **Jim Mickman** and **Sarai Brenner** as they renewed their vows of marriage at First Universalist Church on Aug 4. Jim and Sarai celebrated twenty-five years of marriage, and the great gestures of love in their lives.

Rose Day, who has entered hospice. Caring Bridge site: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/roseday>.

Tom Jackson, who has been diagnosed with esophageal cancer and will undergo 6 weeks of radiation and chemotherapy before undergoing surgery.

Passings

Becky Scott, sister of **Sue Scott**, who died May 16.

Donna Elling, wife of **Lynn Elling**, who died June 1. A memorial service was held at First Universalist June 13.

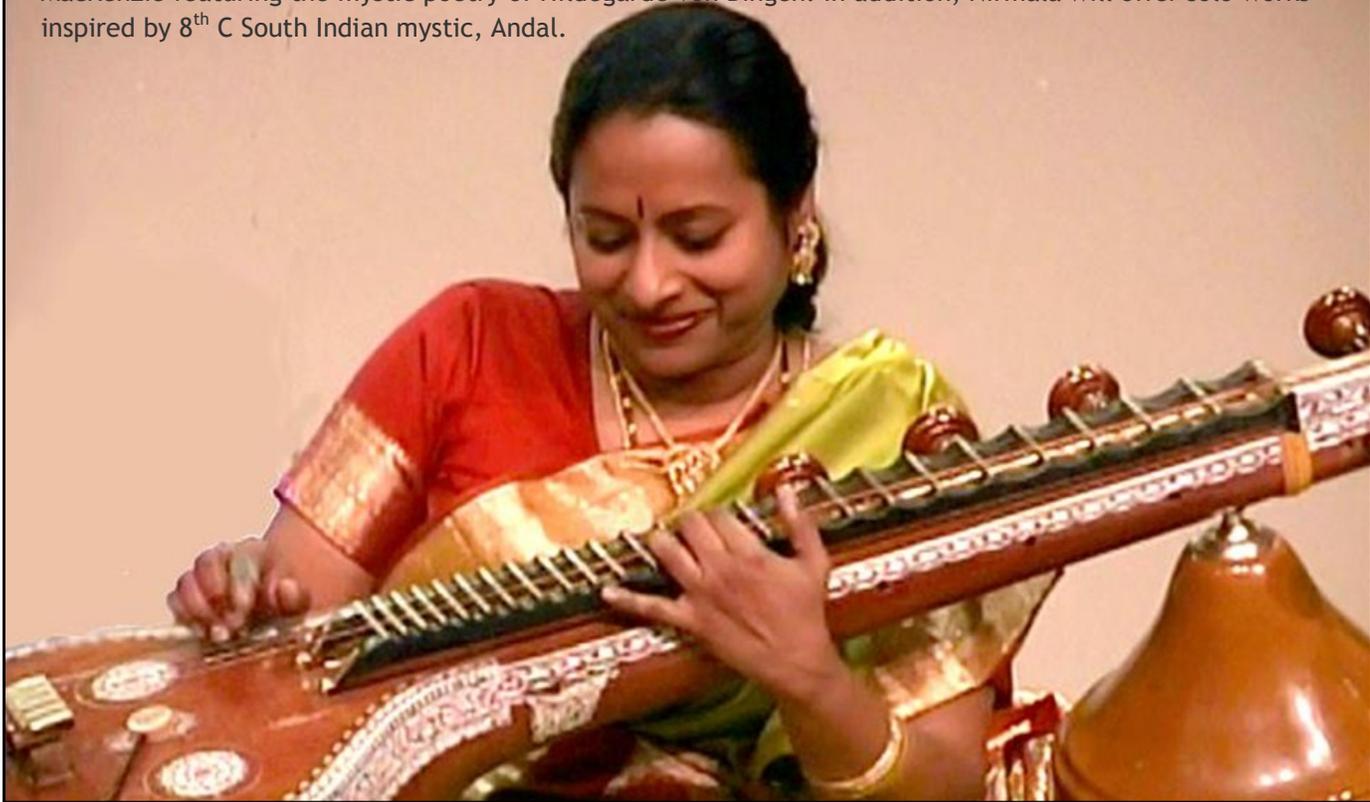
Robert Henson, who died in June.

Chuck Heuser, father of members **Sarah Heuser** and **Laura Kimball**, and grandfather to **Samantha White**, and **Sophia, Ariana, and Alexander Kimball**, who died on July 10.

Edith Stone, mother of **Ken Stone**, who died in July.

Richard Spratt, **Kayci Rush**, and children, **Katia, Kloie** and **Zo**, as they mourn the loss of their brother and uncle, **Reginal Spratt**, who died August 11.

Don't miss September 23 when First Universalist Choir is joined by Nirmala Rajasekar, world renowned Carnatic veena virtuoso and vocalist of South India. The choir will perform *Spiritus Sanctus* written by Ruth MacKenzie featuring the mystic poetry of Hildegarde von Bingen. In addition, Nirmala will offer solo works inspired by 8th C South Indian mystic, Andal.



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